

Spatial Variation of Socio-economic Activities and Settlement Relocation in Pandaw Model Village, Kyauktan Township

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Abstract

Socio-economic study is not a new topic in the discipline of social sciences including geography. However, most studies focus on the variation of socio-economic conditions at regional and district levels. This is because census data are readily available at this level. In this paper, intra-village level variation of social economic conditions is analysed with the aim to assess the benefit and cost of settlement relocation with reference to Pandaw Model Village. Pandaw Model Village includes two settlement areas: clustered and dispersed. Socio-economic data of the study area were derived from official statistics and two intensive field surveys and structured interviews. The results found that there show great socio-economic variations between two settlement areas. From the point of socio-economic variation and physical environment, if dispersed settlements are relocated in clustered areas, the village will benefit from the scale of economic and social welfare. On the other hand, fuel and water supply problems will be encountered.

1. Introduction

Socio-economic study is not a new topic in the discipline of social sciences including geography. However, the most studies focus on the variation of socio-economic conditions at regional and district levels. This is because census data are readily available at this level. Murayama (2003) identified the common elements of socio-economic conditions such as social class, economic status, cultural (ethnic) and occupational structure of the Peninsula of Malaysia at district level, and explained these spatial variations by using factor analysis. Berentsen (1999) used socio-economic indicators like population, gross domestic product per capita, purchasing power, vehicle registrations, etc. to analyse the results of the reunification of Germany.

Very recently, some young scholars studied socio-economic conditions of a settlement area in relation to its structure. Than Than Khine (2004) and Zin Mar Win (2004) show that socio-economic conditions are varied according to the sequential developments of a settlement unit. They divided the settlement into three areas based on their development stage. The initially developed area was occupied by people of stable and high occupation status and reveals the best socio-economic conditions in the whole settlement area. The recently developed area was occupied by wage earners and temporary job workers. Although the recently developed area has a relatively higher income than the intermediately developed area, the nature of their jobs is not as stable.

Pandaw Model Village located in the Southern part of Kyauktan Township can be tentatively divided into clustered and dispersed settlement areas. Both clustered and dispersed settlements have been occupied for more than 80 years . With the development of technology and the improvement of transportation, the government is trying to promote the living standard and living conditions of rural areas. Accordingly, Pandaw was designated as Model Village in 2000. With the designation as model village, it has tried to relocate the dispersed settlement in the clustered area. Although this relocation project was started in 2000, it has not been fully realised yet. Relocation of dispersed settlement in a clustered area could benefit from points of scale of economic and social welfare generated by co-location. However, there could arise some socio-economic problems generated from income differentiation, water and fuel supplies, etc. This paper tries to analyse cost and benefit of settlement relocation based on the socio-economic conditions of the clustered and dispersed settlement areas.

Problem

Based on the above backgrounds of the study area, the problems of this study could be stated as follows:

- How do socio-economic conditions differ between clustered and dispersed areas?
- What are the factors generating such socio-economic variations?
- What will benefit and cost be if settlement relocation occurs?

Data and method

General information on Pandaw Model Village was derived from the Pandaw Model Village Peace and Development Council. Detailed socio-economic data were collected through two intensive field surveys and structured interviews conducted in September 2003 and May 2004, respectively. To understand the socio-economic conditions, every odd- number house (50%) of the clustered area and about 25% of the randomly selected samples of the dispersed settlement area from Pandaw Model Village were interviewed. Although the sample sizes of two areas are different, they can be assumed as representative data for the present analysis.

Spatial variations of socio-economic conditions between clustered and dispersed areas are examined based on interview results. Furthermore, functional relationships between Pandaw Model Village and its adjacent town and villages are analysed to be able to fully understand these spatial variations. Through the above sample analysis, the socio-economic situation of the study area could be clearly understood. Then, based on socio-economic variation results and functional relationships, suggestions for the benefit and cost of the relocation project are discussed.

The second part of the paper states the general background of the study area based on data derived from official statistics. The third part deals with the analysis of variations of socio-economic conditions between clustered and dispersed settlement areas. Then, the functional relationship of Pandaw Model Village and its adjacent villages and towns is analysed. Finally, this paper discusses the causes that generate the variations and

existence of two settlement areas, and finds out the possibilities that would occur by relocating the clustered settlement.

2. Background of the Study Area

Socio-economic conditions of an area are greatly modified by its physical and cultural backgrounds. This is especially true in developing countries. Thus, it is necessary to understand those backgrounds before discussing the real socio-economic conditions.

Physical bases

The study area is located longitudinally between $96^{\circ} 32'$ and $96^{\circ} 37'$ East and latitudinally between $16^{\circ} 58'$ and $16^{\circ} 63'$ North. In terms of relative position, it is located in the Southern part of Kyauktan Township. Since it is located on the banks of Hmaw-wun Creek (opposite of Kyauktan Town), the fishing industry is developed. The famous Kyaik Hmaw-wun Yele Pagoda is located on a small island in the Hmaw-wun Creek between Kyauktan Town and Pandaw Model Village. As a result, transportation (ferry) services between Kyauktan and Kyauktan Yele Pagoda are dominated by Pandaw Model villagers. Being located on the alluvial soils deposited from Yangon River and Hmaw-wun Creek and receiving Tropical Monsoon Climate, the study area has favourable conditions for rice cultivation. Pandaw Model Village is bounded by Hmaw-wun Creek in the North, Dhamainseik Creek in the West, Sandi Creek in the South, and Kalama Creek in the East. This water bounded location has created different transportation and socio-economic aspects for the inhabitants.

In terms of administration, Pandaw Model Village is included in the Pandaw Village Tract which is composed of Pandaw Model Village and Kyungalay Village (Fig. 1).

Development process of Pandaw Model Village

The present Pandaw Model Village was formed by relocation of people from the former Kyaukmaye Village located near the ferry port. In the last 50 years, there were about 70 households in the village and it was located between Yuzana Street in the South and the Western side of the monastery in the East. Before the river bank was eroded, the village was extended about 300 feet to the river side from the present river bank. In 1974, the village area was extended to the Southern part. To solve the water supply problem large ponds were dug in the Southern part of the village. In 1986, the Eastern parts of the village were extended to accommodate the increasing population. In 1990, the Pandaw Kamakaloke Motor Road

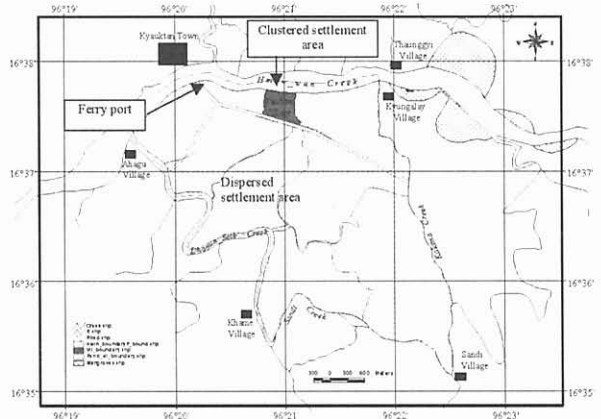


Fig. 1: Location of Pandaw Model Village (Source: Land Record Department, Kyauktan Township)

construction project was started. To take the advantage of motor road accessibility, Pandaw Village extended to the Southern part of the village and filled the former paddy fields between village and newly constructed road with houses. Recent village expansion was done in the south-eastern part in 1998 (Fig. 2).

Since agriculture lands are distributed in large fields, many farmers permanently live not only in the village but also in the paddy field. From the evidence of the topographic map (one Inch- 94D/6) it becomes clear that there have been some houses in the paddy field since 1933. However, interview results show that some people who are more than 80 years old, have been living in the dispersed area since they were born.

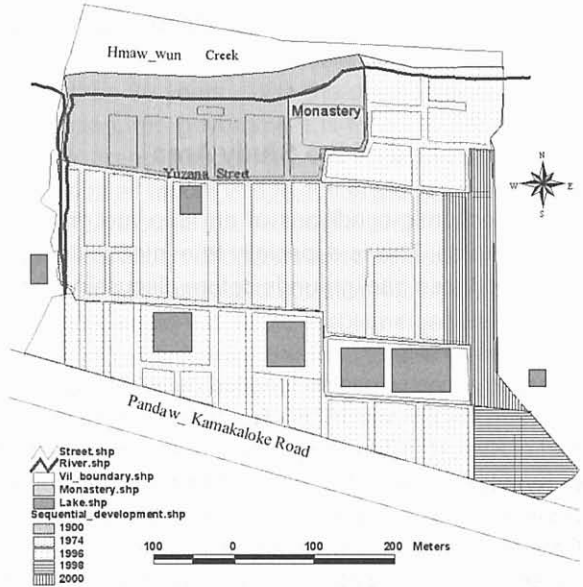


Fig. 2: Sequential development of Pandaw Model Village (Clustered Area) (Source: Based on personal interviews conducted with the village-heads (2003-04)

Economic bases

Since the study area is located on the alluvial deposit plain, agriculture has become one of the major economies. The general land-use pattern of the village is shown in Fig. 3. More than 95% of the area is occupied by agriculture. Two percent is left for the pasturing of cattle. In 2003, there were 348 farmers and 924 workers engaged in agriculture. Although many farmers use traditional cattle-plowing-and-threshing methods, mechanisation is spreading in the agriculture sector. There are 2 tractors and 29 power tillers in the village. These machines are not only used in agriculture but also in transportation. Traditional farmers use bullock-cart for transportation of farm produce. There are 222 bullock-carts in the study area.

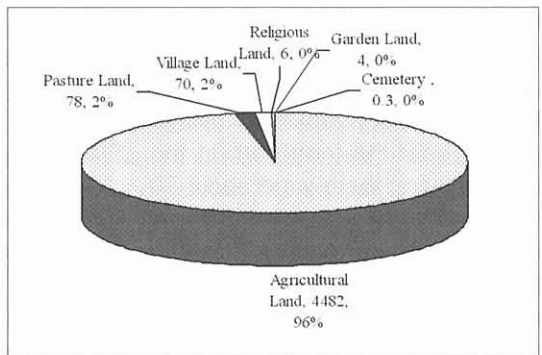


Fig. 3: General land use pattern of Pandaw Model Village (2003) (Source: Village Peace and Development Council, Pandaw Model Village)

